

Research Report DCSF-RR105

Primary School Curriculum Omnibus Survey (March 2009) Top Line Findings Report

TNS on behalf of COI Research



department for
children, schools and families

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Purpose of the research

This quantitative research aimed to seek the views of parents on the national primary school curriculum and how it may be changing following the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum. This research also sought to inform public debate, policy decision making and support wider communications to parents at the launch, implementation and further consultation on the new primary curriculum.

Methodology

The research took the form of a face-to-face general public omnibus survey with a nationally representative sample of 918 parents of children and young people aged 0-18. The data presented are weighted to reflect the national profile.

Key Findings

Key findings from respondent parents involved in the survey included:

- Half said they knew something about the Primary School Curriculum.
- 46% agreed that the Primary Curriculum should now be changed. Agreement was slightly higher amongst parents of 4-19 year olds (52%)
- Over 80% agreed that children should learn life skills at primary school such as effective communication, teamwork and creative thinking.
- 92% agreed that each of the six new areas of learning should help children to develop their reading, writing, Maths and life skills
- Over 90% agreed that young children should learn through play at primary school.
- The majority thought the single most important subject or skill that their child should have learnt about / gained by the time they finished primary school was reading and writing (55%). Maths, learning how to respect each other and learning to be healthy and stay safe were the next three most important subjects for all respondent parents.
- Most agreed that life skills such as teamwork are as important as English and Maths (83%).
- The majority thought that parents know best on what to teach children of primary school age about life skills, health and wellbeing and the environment. They considered teachers to know best on what to teach children of primary school age about Information Technology, Maths, reading and writing.
- The majority of all respondent parents agreed that the state school curriculum aims to help all children in England to become:
 - Young people who enjoy learning, make good progress and achieve their full potential (86%);
 - Confident children who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives (82%); and
 - Responsible people who grow up to make a positive contribution to society (78%).

Parents' attitudes towards changes to the Primary School Curriculum

Top line findings from questions placed on two waves of the TNS face to face omnibus survey (11th - 17th March 2009)

Note: The results in the following tables are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
Q1 The Government has ordered an independent review of the Primary School Curriculum, which is currently being undertaken, were you aware of this fact? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't know 	30% 69% 1%	26% 73% 1%	35% 63% 2%	32% 67% 1%	29% 70% 1%
Q2 How much would you say you know about the Primary School Curriculum? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot • A little • Not very much • Nothing at all 	13% 37% 30% 20%	8% 31% 36% 24%	14% 44% 31% 11%	17% 40% 26% 17%	15% 32% 31% 22%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
Q3 The Primary School Curriculum was last changed ten years ago. How much do you agree or disagree that the Primary Curriculum should now be changed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	19% 27% 44% 6% 5%	17% 27% 50% 4% 2%	21% 31% 38% 6% 4%	21% 28% 37% 8% 6%	20% 25% 42% 6% 7%
Q4 How much do you agree or disagree, that children should learn life skills at primary school such as effective communication, teamwork and creative thinking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	55% 26% 14% 3% 2%	54% 26% 16% 4% 1%	57% 28% 11% 3% 1%	60% 24% 11% 3% 2%	53% 29% 14% 1% 3%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
<p>Q5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the new areas of learning?</p> <p>....Each of the six areas of learning should help children develop their reading, writing, Maths and life skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	70% 22% 6% 2% 1%	67% 24% 7% 3% 0%	71% 22% 5% 1% 0%	71% 22% 4% 1% 1%	67% 24% 6% 2% 1%
<p>....Information Technology (IT) skills are as important as English and Maths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	58% 25% 6% 8% 4%	52% 29% 5% 9% 5%	58% 26% 5% 7% 4%	60% 23% 6% 8% 4%	57% 24% 7% 9% 4%
<p>....Life skills such as teamwork are as important as English and Maths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	57% 26% 7% 8% 3%	57% 24% 6% 10% 1%	59% 25% 7% 7% 3%	57% 26% 7% 7% 3%	53% 26% 9% 8% 4%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
<p>....Young children should (have fun and) learn through play at primary school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	74% 19% 5% 2% <1%	74% 20% 3% 2% 0%	75% 19% 4% 2% 0%	74% 18% 5% 3% 1%	70% 22% 6% 3% 0%
<p>Q.6 By the time your child has finished primary school, how important do you feel it is that your child has learnt about the following subjects or gained the following skills? From the below, please say, which, are your five most important, starting with the most important.</p> <p>Q.6a... Which is the <u>most</u> important subject or skill?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Maths • Science • Information Technology (IT) • Have started to learn a foreign language • History - the main events and people in British history • Geography - the major cities and rivers of Britain • Learnt to be healthy and stay safe • Learnt how to respect each other • Understand how to care for the environment 	55% 14% 4% 2% 1% <1% 0% 8% 14% 1%	57% 12% 6% 2% 1% 1% 0% 6% 15% 1%	54% 14% 6% 3% 1% 1% 0% 9% 13% 1%	54% 15% 3% 2% 1% 0% 0% 10% 13% 2%	55% 16% 4% 2% 0% 0% 0% 6% 17% 0%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
Q6.b... Which is the <u>second</u> most important subject or skill? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Maths • Science • Information Technology (IT) • Have started to learn a foreign language • History - the main events and people in British history • Geography - the major cities and rivers of Britain • Learnt to be healthy and stay safe • Learnt how to respect each other • Understand how to care for the environment 	22% 40% 6% 5% 1% 1% 1% 8% 14% 3%	20% 40% 6% 3% 0% 1% 1% 10% 15% 3%	22% 39% 6% 4% 1% 1% 1% 9% 15% 3%	26% 39% 7% 5% 1% 1% 0% 6% 14% 2%	24% 37% 6% 10% 1% 0% 0% 6% 13% 3%
Q6.c... Which is the <u>third</u> most important subject or skill? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Maths • Science • Information Technology (IT) • Have started to learn a foreign language • History - the main events and people in British history • Geography - the major cities and rivers of Britain • Learnt to be healthy and stay safe • Learnt how to respect each other • Understand how to care for the environment 	10% 17% 18% 17% 3% 3% 1% 12% 14% 6%	10% 18% 15% 15% 3% 4% 2% 14% 16% 5%	10% 18% 16% 16% 3% 2% 2% 13% 15% 5%	9% 17% 17% 18% 3% 3% 1% 11% 16% 5%	9% 17% 21% 14% 1% 3% 1% 12% 14% 9%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
Q6.d... Which is the <u>fourth</u> most important subject or skill? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Maths • Science • Information Technology (IT) • Have started to learn a foreign language • History - the main events and people in British history • Geography - the major cities and rivers of Britain • Learnt to be healthy and stay safe • Learnt how to respect each other • Understand how to care for the environment 	6% 13% 14% 17% 5% 6% 3% 13% 14% 8%	6% 13% 13% 18% 6% 5% 3% 11% 14% 10%	7% 13% 12% 16% 6% 6% 3% 16% 16% 7%	6% 15% 14% 16% 4% 5% 4% 13% 14% 9%	5% 15% 14% 16% 6% 7% 2% 11% 14% 9%
Q6.e... Which is the <u>fifth</u> most important subject or skill? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Maths • Science • Information Technology (IT) • Have started to learn a foreign language • History - the main events and people in British history • Geography - the major cities and rivers of Britain • Learnt to be healthy and stay safe • Learnt how to respect each other • Understand how to care for the environment 	4% 8% 13% 16% 7% 9% 6% 17% 10% 11%	4% 8% 12% 16% 6% 8% 6% 19% 12% 10%	5% 10% 13% 15% 7% 9% 4% 17% 10% 11%	3% 6% 16% 14% 6% 11% 6% 16% 10% 12%	2% 6% 14% 18% 7% 7% 6% 21% 8% 12%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
Total of Questions 6a to 6e above - The five most important subjects learned or skills gained by the end of Primary School ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Maths • Learnt how to respect each other • Learnt to be healthy and stay safe • Information Technology (IT) • Science • Understand how to care for the environment • History - the main events and people in British history • Have started to learn a foreign language • Geography - the major cities and rivers of Britain 	97% 92% 66% 58% 56% 55% 28% 20% 16% 11%	98% 92% 71% 60% 54% 51% 28% 18% 17% 11%	97% 93% 68% 64% 54% 53% 27% 18% 16% 9%	98% 92% 67% 57% 55% 58% 29% 19% 16% 10%	95% 90% 66% 56% 61% 58% 32% 17% 15% 9%
Q.7 In your opinion, who do you think knows best about what to teach children of primary school age in the following areas, Teachers or Parents? <p>... Life Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Parents • Don't know 	15% 83% 2%	15% 82% 3%	13% 83% 3%	17% 81% 2%	18% 81% 1%

¹ Amalgamated figures giving the percentage of parents who placed the subject / skill among their five most important.

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
... Information Technology (IT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers Parents Don't know 	91% 7% 2%	90% 8% 2%	90% 8% 2%	93% 6% 1%	90% 8% 1%
... Maths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers Parents Don't know 	91% 7% 2%	90% 8% 3%	93% 5% 2%	91% 8% 2%	90% 8% 2%
... Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers Parents Don't know 	66% 32% 2%	67% 30% 2%	66% 31% 3%	65% 33% 2%	68% 31% 1%
... Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers Parents Don't know 	82% 16% 2%	79% 18% 3%	84% 14% 2%	81% 17% 2%	85% 14% 1%
... Health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers Parents Don't know 	13% 86% 2%	12% 86% 2%	11% 87% 2%	11% 87% 2%	17% 82% 1%
... The environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers Parents Don't know 	41% 56% 3%	42% 55% 4%	39% 58% 3%	42% 54% 4%	48% 48% 4%

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
<p>Q8 How much do you agree or disagree that the state school curriculum aims to help all children in England to become:</p> <p>...Young people who enjoy learning, make good progress and achieve their full potential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	<p>58%</p> <p>28%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>56%</p> <p>29%</p> <p>11%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>61%</p> <p>27%</p> <p>9%</p> <p>2%</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>58%</p> <p>29%</p> <p>8%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>55%</p> <p>31%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>2%</p>
<p>...Confident children who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	<p>49%</p> <p>33%</p> <p>12%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>2%</p>	<p>49%</p> <p>32%</p> <p>14%</p> <p>4%</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>51%</p> <p>33%</p> <p>11%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>2%</p>	<p>51%</p> <p>32%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>3%</p>	<p>46%</p> <p>32%</p> <p>11%</p> <p>8%</p> <p>4%</p>
<p>...Responsible people who grow up to make a positive contribution to society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	<p>48%</p> <p>30%</p> <p>14%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>2%</p>	<p>51%</p> <p>25%</p> <p>18%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>1%</p>	<p>51%</p> <p>31%</p> <p>11%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>2%</p>	<p>50%</p> <p>32%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>3%</p>	<p>45%</p> <p>30%</p> <p>17%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>3%</p>

Question	All parents of children aged 0-18 (918)	Parents of children aged 0-3 (284)	Parents of children aged 4-10 (456)	Parents of children aged 11-15 (357)	Parents of children aged 16-18 (210)
Q.9 How much do you agree or disagree, that parents should have a choice over when their child starts school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	37% 23% 10% 12% 18%	41% 22% 12% 8% 16%	37% 23% 10% 11% 19%	36% 22% 9% 14% 19%	36% 24% 11% 10% 19%
Q.10 How much do you agree or disagree, that children born in June, July and August should start school in the September following their fourth birthday? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a lot • Agree a little • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree a little • Disagree a lot 	37% 21% 17% 12% 13%	40% 19% 17% 12% 11%	39% 22% 15% 11% 13%	35% 24% 17% 10% 14%	39% 19% 18% 13% 12%

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